



**Frances
Bedford**

Independent State MP for Florey

MEDIA RELEASE

16 May, 2018

NEWSTART IS NO START

Frances Bedford, Independent MP for Florey, is hosting a Community Day of Action tomorrow, Thursday 17 May, on the grassed area outside St Francis Xavier Cathedral (weather permitting – or in the adjacent Cathedral Hall).

“I’m supporting community calls to increase the Newstart allowance by a minimum of at least \$50 so that people reliant on this low fixed income can survive while trying to find work,” Ms Bedford said.

“It’s time to stop passing the buck and make sure overlapping responsibilities are not used as an excuse to do nothing. People are facing dreadful circumstances while governments work out what, if anything, to do – and doing nothing in the meantime is not good enough.”

Speakers supporting the day of action will include Father Philip Marshall, The Anti-Poverty Network and organisers and volunteers from Adelaide Day Centre, as well as parliamentary, local government and community leaders and groups - united in calls for an increase to Newstart.

Newstart is \$160 under the poverty line. It is No Start. Economic groups such as the ACOSS, Uniting Communities, Anglicare, St Vincent de Paul and the Salvation Army also support a rise. Frances Bedford highlighted this in her Parliamentary Address in Reply:

“As a community we must commend the 10 South Australian Councils: Port Adelaide Enfield, Streaky Bay, Salisbury, Playford, Onkaparinga, Mount Gambier, Kangaroo Is, Copper Coast, Clare Valley and Adelaide City Council who have advocated for a rise to Newstart, an issue out of their ‘jurisdiction’. The three tiers of government must work together on all issues of poverty and we must acknowledge the work charities and faith groups do to deal with acts of injustice.”

“Almost all of us here know that want and misery exist in our own constituencies. It is not good enough to say, 'That's a local government issue,' or, 'that's not us, that's the commonwealth's responsibility.' We are all Australians and it is our shared responsibility.”

“Every day an ever-growing number of our constituents bring us problems, not of their making: problems flowing from cost-of-living expenses, homelessness, poverty and unemployment. They cannot get benefits without an address. And they cannot get financial counselling because it has been cut in state and federal budgets. Without financial counselling, they cannot even start to try to get the help they need to get by. It is hard to ask for help and worse to wait weeks to maybe begin getting it.”

“The time to act is now. The time to make a difference is now. Let us unite and make better basics a priority. We know what needs to be done. Let's just do it”

Newstart is No Start: Agenda

10:00 am: Special performance by the Adelaide Day Centre for Homeless Persons

10:10 am: Frances Bedford MP introduces petition that will go around the group

10:20 am: Pas Forgione of the Anti-Poverty Network, introduces the work of the network, supporting the testimonies of those with incomes below the poverty line

10:30 am: Matt Osborn, Deputy Mayor of Port Adelaide Enfield, first council that advocated for a raise to Newstart will tell us why the council spoke outside of their jurisdiction.

10:40 am: Sarah Hanson-Young, Senator for Federal Parliament

10:50 am: Vicar General, Philip Marshall speech

Note: speeches will be filmed

A copy of the petition can be downloaded at:

<https://francesbedfordcom.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/petition-newstart.pdf>

Further Information: Contact Frances on 8263 2666